

TREŇČÍN – CITY ON THE RIVER

Accompanying report to the competition submission

Concept

We approach this competition as a unique opportunity for transforming Trencin into a city with a top class quality of life for its citizens and a world-class destination for international visitors and businesses alike: a sustainably led urban redevelopment scheme that has the potential to transform the city far beyond the project's immediate space and to decisively shape its long-term development.

The central concept is to **rebalance urban activity between the two banks of the Vah**, considering the riverfront as a generator for the city as a whole. The present disparity, with the north bank poorly equipped and the south bank over-privileged, hinders the city's potential for a sustainable development in the long-term. Our proposal aims at integrating the north bank into an urban system much greater than a mono-centric urban expanse where the old core dominates. We aim at transforming the north bank into a location that not only matches the old core in terms of quality of urban environment, but also contributes to the city's prosperity.

Wider Context

The project addresses the city's double challenge as both **a historic old town**, a delicate urban structure to be preserved and cherished, and as **an evolving territory**, required to adapt and re-orientate itself towards sustainable urban growth. On the south bank the historic and cultural character of the city is not only conserved, but also enhanced with the creation of a cultural mall and a covered market: an extension of the old core and a smooth transition to river. On the north bank, the focus is on the development of the city's commercial and business character: a new 'city gate' and the first point of arrival offering a buzz of activity together with an open public promenade offering the best views of the castle and the old city over the Vah.

Functional use and programme

The new north-south connection combined with an opening of the city's access to the water form the spine of our proposed spatial reconfiguration. We a reprogramming of the territory along both banks of the Vah aims at creating a network of attractors along the river encouraging the area's multi-functional use.

South Bank:

- Riverside park with sport and leisure facilities including new marina
- Cultural complex including cinema, theatre, open forum and cultural centre
- Central food market
- Goods railway station (existing central station conversion)
- Eco-centre

North Bank:

- New passenger railway station
- Old Herold housing complex
- Riverside commercial and business complex
- Underground parking
- Riverside park

Bridge:

- Pedestrian and cycle connection
- Public terrace

Spatial composition and arrangement

South Bank:

The creation of **a new public ground reconnecting the city to the water**, brings together into a highly accessible space the market, cultural and social facilities, sports and leisure facilities. **Parkland and green space** characterise the waterside area while further uses and functions are arranged on a common ground characterised most prominently by **open access** and **high visibilities**, as well as **limited car traffic and through-traffic** (now channelled underground). In effect, the spatial qualities of the traditional old core are being re-established.

North Bank:

Here, a **public promenade** unifies the commercial and business centre with the new passenger station and the bridge. Cafes, restaurants, and commercial space line up this public space on a raised deck over the street, whereas housing and office space are found at the higher levels. Parking space is created underground. The high-density development also allows for the riverside and its views of the city's unique panorama to be enjoyed by visitors, residents, commuters, and workers alike. Last, the development of the north bank creates **the city's new modern skyline, a landmark the city's future growth**.

Bridge:

The existing bridge is transformed into **a pedestrian and cycle connection** across the river. It incorporates a great amount of **public space** both along the circulation space as well as on a raised **terrace** above it.

Old Herold Housing:

Structured on modular units, this low-rise high-density scheme, is characterised most prominently by public space; every block of dwellings is equipped with small-scale common space that can be flexibly appropriated by the community. North-south streets are reserved for pedestrians, west-east for cars. This **mosaic of diverse small-scale public spaces within a two-level network of car and pedestrian movement** forms the basis for the

community's success and its integration within the city.

Transport and connectivity

Currently the 1st class road along the south bank restricts the connection to the riverfront, negating the city of one of its greatest assets. The project aims at separating traffic flows on the south bank: high-speed regional and national traffic is channelled underground through the site, while the ground is reserved to low-speed urban traffic. This solution re-establishes a sense of place by integrating the river back to city while facilitating inter-regional connections.

Further, the relocation of the passenger train station to the north bank allows for a modernisation of railway infrastructure, decongests the old core, and most importantly equips the north bank with a major attractor and pole of activity.

Last, the project privileges cycling and pedestrian movement in the old core and the riverside areas. The new bridge creates a unified 'public ground' stretching out both sides of the Vah to include the two riverside areas, the new cultural facilities, and the open market in the old core.

Relations to the Landscape

Our approach aims to blend the natural landscape of the river banks into the city. We can identify:

- The continuation of the city's ground towards the river, through the creation of a public deck/platform structure.
- The conservation of all the woodland areas as voids within the public platform, accessible from it.
- The bridge as an urban island within the river.

Impact on the panorama and silhouette of the city

Our proposal considers KPU's recommendations regarding the functional uses in the left bank; the largest part of the project this side of the Vah is about green areas and areas for social and cultural use.

The project respects and adds value **Trencin's unique cityscape**. The silhouette of the castle and the old core remain unobstructed and visible from all along the public spaces of the North bank. Last, the new passenger railway station provides visitors with the city's spectacular panorama upon their arrival.